

# English Heritage Battlefield Report: Naseby 1645

**Naseby (14 June 1645)**

**Parishes:** Naseby; Sulby; Sibbertoft; Clipston

**District:** Daventry

**County:** Northamptonshire

**Grid Ref:** SP 685799 (centred on the battlefield Memorial)

## Historical Context

The disappointing manner in which the campaign of 1644 had ended, particularly at the second Battle of Newbury, prompted Parliament to reconstitute the bulk of its forces into a single army - the 'New Model' - and to appoint fresh commanders. This new army, led by Sir Thomas Fairfax, took the field at the end of April 1645; the first task set it was to relieve the Parliamentarian garrison at Taunton. Soon afterwards the main Royalist army, led by King Charles I, marched out of Oxford towards Stow-on-the-Wold.

The Royalist strategists, however, had not yet determined their plan of campaign. Some wished to attack the Scots and reverse the decision of Marston Moor by recapturing the North. Others wanted to try conclusions with the New Model Army. Either strategy was viable but whichever was chosen needed to be prosecuted wholeheartedly. Instead, a feeble compromise was arrived at: 3,000 cavalry were detached and sent under Lord Goring to the West; the remainder of a weakened army continued northwards.

Meanwhile, Taunton had been relieved and Parliament now ordered the New Model Army to besiege the Royalist headquarters in Oxford. Rather than respond directly to this threat the Royalists agreed to fall upon the Parliamentarian-held town of Leicester, reasoning that such a stroke would suffice to draw Fairfax and the New Model away from Oxford. The supposition was correct: reports of the storming of Leicester, which took place on 31 May, shocked Parliament into ending the attempt against Oxford. Sir Thomas Fairfax was left at liberty to move against the King's army without interference from London.

As Fairfax closed with them during the early days of June the Royalists remained largely immobile. Moreover, their patrolling was slack and the close proximity of the New Model Army came as a surprise to them on more than one occasion. The second time this occurred the Royalists, quartered around Market Harborough, were presented with a dilemma. Withdrawing to Leicester with the enemy so near risked turning retreat into rout. If they stood and fought however they would do so against heavy odds: the Royalists numbered possibly as few as 7,500 troops, whereas the Parliamentarians mustered almost 14,000.

Contrary to Prince Rupert's advice the decision was to fight. The Royalist army marched out of Market Harborough searching for suitable ground upon which to give battle. At one point Rupert imagined the New Model Army was falling back and he hurried his men forward to try and gain a tactical advantage. But the Parliamentarians, it transpired, were merely shifting their ground to offer their opponents a more neutral field of battle, one that would encourage the Royalists to attack. The battlefield upon which the two armies eventually deployed, just over a mile north of Naseby, was acceptable to both sides.

## Location and description of the Battlefield

The landscape over which the final manoeuvring before the battle occurred, between Market Harborough and the village of Naseby, is undulating. A succession of low ridges served to screen the movements of the two armies from one another for much of the time, leading the Royalists, in particular, to mistake the enemy's

intentions. Highest of all is the ridge immediately north of Naseby; the approaches to it on the direct route from Market Harborough (via Clipston) are daunting for an attacker so Oliver Cromwell, who did not wish to discourage the Royalists from giving battle, prevailed upon Fairfax to shift the New Model Army's position to less intimidating ground further west. The Battle of Naseby, therefore, was fought on easier terrain, with the New Model Army deployed on a ridge almost 600 feet above sea level to the south and the Royalists formed up on a slightly lower ridge called Dust Hill to the north. In advancing to the attack the Royalists moved approximately 800 yards across the floor of a shallow valley, Broad Moor, which lay between the two ridges.

The accounts of the Battle of Naseby written by eye-witnesses and other contemporaries would probably be sufficient by themselves to enable us to identify where the battle was fought. Matters are made much clearer, however, courtesy of an excellent bird's eye view map of the battlefield, engraved by Robert Streeter to accompany Joshua Sprigge's 1647 history of the campaigns of the New Model Army, *Anglia Rediviva* (see appendix 1). Not only does the map show the two armies' preliminary dispositions in great detail but it gives names to various topographical features of the battlefield, something which the written accounts of the Battle of Naseby tend not to do. Thus we learn that at the outset the Royalists were deployed upon Dust Hill and the Parliamentarians on ground in advance of Mill Hill and Fenny Hill. A sketch map of the battlefield by the Royalist engineer Sir Bernard de Gomme, apparently based on the order of battle given him by Prince Rupert before Naseby was fought, is very similar to Streeter's representation (appendix 2).

### Landscape Evolution

In the Fitzgerald Collection deposited in the Suffolk Record Office (Ipswich branch) there is a map of Naseby parish dated 1630, from which we can gain an impression of what the battlefield might have looked like fifteen years later. The land in the parish was then gathered together in three great open fields: South Field to the south of the village; Turnmoore Field to the north-west; and Shepshoks Field to the north-east. Within these fields medieval strip cultivation was practised so only on their outer edges were they hedged. Thus Turnmoore Field, in which most of the fighting during the battle took place, was hedged where it met the fields of the adjoining parish of Sulby. It was behind this hedge that Cromwell posted Colonel Okey's dragoons on the extreme left of the battlefield: today's parish boundary, the same now as then, marks the dragoons' position.

Turnmoore Field was divided for most of the way from Shepshoks Field to the east by the track running between Naseby and Sibbertoft, which followed almost the same line as the current road. There was a rabbit warren, referred to in accounts of the battle, on the hill between the road and what is now Naseby Covert, just north of Painsnell Spinney. In 1630 this was known as Sheddon Hill but later it was named Lodge Hill, after the warrener's lodge built upon it. Warrens were usually sited on heathland and although Streeter, in his map, depicts the furzes (gorse) associated with such terrain beyond the hedges bounding the battlefield, it is apparent that there were furzes in Broad Moor as well. Richard Symonds, who served with the Royalist army at Naseby, describes it advancing to the attack 'through a bottome full off furse bushes'<sup>1</sup>. Areas of ground within open fields were sometimes allowed to remain heathland, especially if they were poorly drained.

Throughout the 18th century the landscape remained little changed. Even by 1822 the land was largely unenclosed although a reservoir and new road had been built to the west of Naseby. Interestingly, maps of this period indicate a lane emerging from the Sulby hedges into the Welford-Naseby road. Although it can still be seen today, it is uncertain whether it was there at the time of the battle.

Many of the small pits scattered across Turnmoore Field and Dust Hill probably relate to 18th-century gravel digging but some may date from the battle or relate to burials.

The appearance of the battlefield as it is today, a patchwork of small fields, was brought about by enclosure in 1828. At the same time the Sibbertoft road was straightened. A large obelisk commemorating the battle was

erected alongside the Clipston Road in 1823, about a mile south-east of the battlefield. During the 1930s the Cromwell Association erected a second memorial on the battlefield itself, just off the Sibbertoft road. In 1991 the Northamptonshire Archaeology Unit produced interpretive panels for the Battle of Naseby to accompany both monuments.

Most recently the building of the A14 has cut through the battlefield area. Although largely hidden by being set in a cutting, it is as yet uncertain how much traffic noise will be audible in the battlefield area.

### **The Battle: its Sources and Interpretation**

As befits its status as the most important clash of arms of the First Civil War, Naseby is a well-documented battle. On the Parliamentarian side the account contained in Joshua Sprigge's *Anglia Rediviva* is the most comprehensive. Sprigge was Sir Thomas Fairfax's chaplain and although it has been questioned whether he was actually present at Naseby he without doubt read all the pamphlet and newsletter accounts published immediately afterwards to ensure that his history was as authoritative as possible. The following extract from Sprigge begins with the manoeuvres before the battle:

...the Enemies Army, which before was the greatest part of it out of our view, by reason of the Hill that interposed, we saw plainly advancing in order towards us: and the winde blowing somewhat Westwardly, by the Enemies advance so much on their right hand, it was evident, that he designed to get the winde of us: which occasioned the General to draw down into a large fallow field on the Northwest side of Naseby, flanked on the left hand with a hedge, which was a convenient place for us to fight the Enemy in. And indeed seeing his resolution to advance upon us, we took the best advantage we could of the ground, possessing the ledge of a Hill, running from East to West; upon which our Army being drawn up, fronted towards the Enemy. But considering it might be of advantage to us to draw up our Army out of sight of the Enemy; who marched upon a plain ground towards us: we retreated about an 100 paces from the ledge of the Hill, that so the Enemy might not perceive in what form our battell was drawn, nor see any confusion therein, and yet we to see the form of their battell; to which we could conform ourselves for advantages, and recover the advantage of the Hill when we pleased, which accordingly we did. The enemy perceiving this retreat, thought (as since they had confessed) we were drawing off to avoid fighting (and just then it was brought to the King, that our Army was flying to Northampton) which did occasion them the more to precipitate; for they made so much haste, that they left many of their Ordnance behinde them.

The General [Fairfax], together with the Major-General [Philip Skippon], put the severall Brigades of Foot into order: having committed the Ordering of the Horse to Lieutenant-General Cromwel, who did obtain from the General, That seeing the Horse were neere 6000 and were to bee fought in two wings; His Excellency would please to make Col. Ireton Commissary gen. of horse, and appoint him to command the Left Wing, that day, the command of the Right wing being as much as the Lieutenant-General could apply himself unto. Which being granted by the General the Lieutenant-General assigned him five Regiments of Horse, a Division of 200 Horse of the Association, for that Wing; and the Dragoons to line the forementioned hedge, to prevent the enemy from annoying the Left flank of the Army. In the mean time the Lieutenant-General having sixe Regiments of Horse with him for the Right wing, disposed them according as the place gave leave. And the form of the whole Battail you have here inserted.

Upon the Enemies approach, the Parliaments army marcht up to the brow of the hill, having placed a Forlorn of Foot (musquetiers) consisting of about 300 down the steep of the hill towards the enemy, somewhere more than Carbine shot from the Main battail, who were ordered to retreat to the battail, whensoever they should be hard pressed upon by the Enemy. The Enemy this

while marched up in good order, a swift march, with a great deal of gallantry and resolution, according to the form here inserted. It is hard to say, whether Wing of our Horse charged first: But the Lieutenant-General not thinking it fit to stand and receive the Enemies charge, advanced forward with the Right wing of the Horse, in the same order wherein it was placed. Our Word that day was, God our strength; Their Word was, Queen Mary. Colonel Whaley being the left hand on the right wing, charged first two Divisions of Langdales Horse, who made a very gallant resistance, and firing at a very close charge, they came to the sword: wherein Col. Whaley's Divisions routed those two Divisions of Langdales, driving them back to Prince Ruperts Regiment, being the Reserve of the enemies Foot, whither indeed they fled for shelter, and rallied: the Reserves to Colonel Whaley, were ordered to second him, which they performed with a great deal of resolution. In the mean time, the rest of the Divisions of the Right wing, being straightned by Furzes on the right hand, advanced with great difficulty, as also by reason of the unevennesse of the ground, and a Conywarren over which they were to march, which put them somewhat out of their order, in their advance. Notwithstanding which difficulty, they came up to the engaging the residue of the Enemies horse on the left wing, whom they routed, and put into great confusion, not one body of the enemies horse which they charged, but they routed, and forced to flie beyond all their Foot, except some that were for a time sheltdred by the Brigade of Foot before mentioned.

Colonel Rossiter, who with his Regiment was just come into the field as the Armies were ready to close; was edged in upon the right flank of the right wing of horse, time not permitting a more fitting and equal disposal of him: whose timely comming (according to his Orders) gave him opportunity of such gallant performance in the battel, as deserves an honourable mentioning.

The Horse of the enemies Left wing being thus beaten from their Foot, retreated back about a quarter of a mile beyond the place where the battail was fought. The success of our Main battail was not answerably; The right hand of the Foot, being the Generals Regiment, stood, not being much pressed upon: Almost all the rest of the main Battail being overpressed, gave ground and went off in some disorder, falling behinde the Reserves; But the Colonels and Officers, doing the duty of very gallant Men, in endeavouring to keep their men from disorder, and finding their attempt fruitless therein, fell into the Reserves with their Colours, choosing rather there to fight and die, then to quit the ground they stood on. The Reserves advancing, commanded by Col. Rainsborough, Col. Hammond, and Lieut. Col. Pride, repelled the Enemy, forcing them to a disorderly retreat. Thus much being said of the Right wing and the main battail, it comes next in order, that an account be given of the Left wing of our Horse.

Upon the approach of the Enemies Right wing of Horse, our Left wing drawing down the brow of the hill to meet them, the Enemy comming on fast, suddenly made a stand, as if they had not expected us in so ready a posture: Ours seeing them stand, made a little stand also, partly by reason of some disadvantage of the ground, and untill the rest of the Divisions of Horse might recover their stations. Upon that the Enemy advanced again, whereupon our Left wing sounded a Charge, and fell upon them: The three right hand Divisions of our Left Wing made the first onset, and those Divisions of the Enemy opposite them, received the Charge: the two left hand Divisions of the Left wing did not advance equally, but being more backward, the opposite Divisions of the Enemy advanced upon them. Of the three right hand Divisions (before mentioned) which advanced, the middlemost charged not home, the other two comming to a close Charge, routed the two opposite Divisions of the Enemy, (And the Commissary Generall seeing one of the enemies Brigades of Foot on his right hand, pressing sore upon our Foot, commanded the Division that was with him, to charge that body of Foot, and for their better encouragement, he himself with great resolution fell in amongst the Musquetiers, where his horse being shot under him, and himself run through the thigh with a Pike, and into the face with an Halbert, was taken prisoner by the enemy, untill afterwards,

when the battell turning, and the enemy in great distraction, he had an happy opportunity to offer his Keeper his liberty, if he would carry him off, which was performed on both parts accordingly). That Division of the enemies which was between, which the other Division of ours should have charged, was carried away in the disorder of the other two, the one of those right hand Divisions of our Left wing that did rout the front of the enemy, charged the Reserve too, and broke them, the other Reserves of the enemy came on, and broke those divisions of ours that charged them; the Divisions of the left hand of the right wing were likewise overborn, having much disadvantage, by reason of pits of water, and other pieces of ditches that they expected not, which hindred them in their order to Charge.

The Enemy thus having worsted our left wing, pursued their advantage, and Prince Rupert himself having prosecuted his successe upon the left wing, almost to Naseby town, in his return summoned the Train, offering them quarter, which being well defended with the Fire-locks, and a Rear-guard left for that purpose, who fired with admirable courage on the Princes horse, refusing to hearken to his offer, and the Prince probably perceiving by that time the successe of our Right wing of Horse, he retreated in great haste to the rescue of the Kings Army, which he found in such a general distress, that instead of attempting anything in the rescue of them (being close followed in the Rear by some of Commissary Generals, Col. Riches, Col. Fleetwoods, Major Huntingtons, and Col. Butlers horse) he made up further untill he came to the ground where the King was rallying the broken horse of his Left wing, and there joyned with them, and made a stand.

To return again to our right wing, which prosecuting their success, by this time had beaten all the enemies horse quite behinde their foot, which when they had accomplished the remaining business was with part to keep the enemies horse from coming to the rescue of their foot, which were now all at our mercy, except one Tertia, which with the other part of the horse we endeavoured to break, but could not, they standing with incredible courage & resolution, although we attempted them in the Flanks, Front and Rear, untill such time as the General called up his own Regiment of foot (the Lieut. General being likewise hastening of them) which immediately fell in with them, with But-end of Muskets (the General charging them at the same time with horse) and so broke them. The enemy had now nothing left in the Field, but his horse, (with whom was the King himself) which they had put again into as good order as the shortnesse of their time, and our near pressing upon them would permit.

The Generall (whom God preserved in many hazardous engagements of his person that day) seeing them in that order, and our whole Army (saving some Bodies of horse which faced the enemy) being busied in the execution upon the foot, and taking, and securing prisoners, endeavouring to put the Army again into as good order as they could receive, to the perfecting of the work that remained: Our foot were somewhat more than a quarter of a mile behinde the horse, and although there wanted no courage nor resolution in the horse themselves alone to have charged the enemy, yet forasmuch as it was not judged fit to put anything to hazard, the businesse being brought (through the goodnesse of God) to so hopefull an issue, It was ordered our horse should not charge the enemy untill the foot were come up; for by this time our foot that were disordered upon the first Charge, being in shorter time then is well imaginable, rallied again, were comming up upon a fast march to joyn with our horse, who were again put in to two wings, within Carbine shot of the enemy, leaving a wide space for the battail of foot to fall in, whereby there was framed, as it were in a trice, a second good Batalia at the latter end of the day; which the enemy perceiving, and that if they stood, they must expect a second Charge from our Horse, Foot, and Artillery (they having lost all their Foot and Guns before) and our Dragoons having already begun to fire upon their horse, they were not willing to abide a second shock upon so great disadvantage as this was like to be, immediately ran away, both Fronts and Reserves, without standing one stroke more: Our

horse had the Chase of them from that place, within two miles of Leicester (being the space of fourteen miles) took many prisoners, and had the execution of them all that way: The number of the slain we had not a certain account of by reason of the prosecution of our Victory, and speedy advance to the reducing of Leicester: the prisoners taken in the field were about five thousand ...

The Field was about a mile broad where the battail was fought, and from the outmost Flank of the right, to the left Wing, took up the whole ground<sup>2</sup>.

There are a number of things to note in Sprigge's account. The Royalists are held to have been moving to the right (i.e. westwards) as they closed with the New Model Army, which persuaded the Parliamentarians 'to draw down into a large fallow field on the Northwest side of Naseby'. This was clearly Turnmoore Field, 'flanked on the left hand with a hedge'. Fairfax's withdrawal of much of his army to a reverse slope is considered to have added impetus to the headlong advance of the Royalists.

After providing a summary of the Parliamentary army's dispositions Sprigge explains how it recovered its ground to meet the enemy assault. He then relates how Cromwell's wing dealt with Sir Marmaduke Langdale's troopers, notwithstanding the fact that many of the Parliamentary horsemen found themselves impeded by furzes, the unevenness of the ground and a rabbit warren. In the centre the Parliamentary Foot fared less well; only the resolution of the second line stemmed the enemy advance. But on the left wing the setback was most marked. Some divisions of Commissary General Ireton's cavalry wing did well and repelled the assault made against them. Others, however, were swept away by the fury of Prince Rupert's attack, which carried the Royalists 'almost to Naseby town'. Here the Royalists summoned the Parliamentary baggage train to surrender only to be rebuffed.

Meanwhile, back on the field of battle, the Royalist Foot was coming under increasing pressure from Cromwell's Horse; he, unlike Prince Rupert, had kept his forces in hand after disposing of his immediate opponents. Eventually, all the Royalist infantry formations surrendered, the resistance of the most stubborn being ended by a charge led by Sir Thomas Fairfax himself. Prince Rupert, who by now had rejoined the King and the Royalist reserve on Dust Hill, considered it wiser not to intervene. When the New Model Army drew itself up into a fresh line of battle the remaining Royalists left the field.

Sprigge's description of the dimensions of the battlefield - 'about a mile broad' - is taken word for word from the pamphlet *A more exact and perfect Relation* published immediately after Naseby was fought<sup>3</sup>.

The chief Royalist source for the Battle of Naseby is Sir Edward Walker's *Brief Memorials of the Unfortunate Success of His Majesty's Army and Affairs in the Year 1645*<sup>4</sup>. Walker was the King's secretary at war and was present at Naseby. He wrote the *Brief Memorials* in exile in 1647 to help Sir Edward Hyde (later Lord Clarendon) in the compilation of his *History of the Rebellion*. The following extract begins with the Royalist army at Market Harborough on 13 June:

...that Night an Allarum was given, that Fairfax with his Army was quartered within six miles of us. This altered our design, and a Council being presently called, resolutions were taken to fight; and rather to march back and seek him out, than to be sought or pursued, contrary (as 'tis said) to Prince Rupert's Opinion; it being our unhappiness, that the Faction of the Court, whereof the most powerful were the Lord Digby and Mr John Ashburnham, and that of the Army [were] ever opposed and were jealous of others. In the Morning early being Saturday the 14 of June, all the Army was drawn up upon a rising Ground of very great Advantage about a Mile from Harborow, which we left on our Back, and there put in order and disposed to give or receive the Charge. The main Battel of Foot was led by the Lord Asteley Sergeant Major General, consisting of 2500: The right Wing of the Horse being about 2000 by Prince Rupert,

and the left Wing by Sir Marmaduke Langdale, with the Northern and Newark Horse; in the Reserve were the King's Lifeguard commanded by the Earl of Lichfield, which were that Day about 500 Horse. The Army thus disposed made a stand on that Ground, and about eight of the Clock in the Morning, it was a question whether the Intelligence were true [*that the enemy were nearby*]; whereupon one Francis Ruce the Scoutmaster was sent to discover; who in a short time returned with a Lye in his Mouth, that he had been two or three Miles forward, and could neither discover or hear of the Rebels. This and a Report they were retreated, made Prince Rupert impatient; and thereupon he drew out a Party of Horse and Musquetiers both to discover and engage them, leaving the Army in that Place and Posture.

But he had not marched above a Mile before he had certain Intelligence of their Advance, and saw their Van. Whereupon he drew nearer with his Horse, and sent back to have the Army to march up to him; and either supposing by their Motion, or being flattered into an Opinion they were upon a Retreat, he desired they should make haste. This made us quit our Ground of Advantage and in reasonable order to advance. Having marched about a Mile and half, we could perceive their Horse in the high Ground about Naseby, but could not judge of their Number or Intentions. To be short, the manner of our March being in full Campania, gave them the means of disposing themselves to the best Advantage; and the Heat of Prince Rupert, and his Opinion they durst not stand him, engaged us before we had either turned our Cannon or chosen fit ground to fight on. About ten of the Clock the Battel began, the first Charge being given by Prince Rupert with his own and Prince Maurice's Troops; who did so well, and were so well seconded, as that they bore all down before them, and were (as 'tis said) Masters of six Pieces of the Rebels Cannon. Presently our Forces advanced up the Hill, the Rebels only discharging five Pieces at them, but over shot them, and so did their Musquetiers. The Foot on either side hardly saw each other until they were within Carabine Shot, and so only made one Volley; ours falling in with Sword and butt end of the Musquet did notable Execution; so much as I saw their Colours fall, and their Foot in great Disorder. And had our left Wing but at this time done half so well as either the Foot or right Wing, we had got in Few Minutes a glorious Victory. Our Foot and Right Wing being thus engaged, our left Wing advanced, consisting of five Bodies of the Northern and Newark Horse; who were opposed by seven great Bodies drawn to their right Wing by Cromwell who commanded there, and who besides the Advantage of Number had that of the Ground, ours marching up the Hill to encounter them. Yet I must needs say ours did as well as the Place and their Number would admit; but being flanked and pressed back, they at last gave Ground and fled: Four of the Rebels Bodies close and in good Order followed them, the rest charged our Foot. At this instant the King's Horse-guards and the King at the Head of them were ready to charge those who followed ours, when a Person of Quality, 'tis said the Earl of Carnwath, took the King's Horse by the Bridle, turned him about, swearing at Him and saying, Will you go upon your Death? and at the same time the Word being given, March to the right Hand, (which was both from assisting ours or assailing them, and (as most concluded) was a civil Command for every one to shift for himself) we turned about and ran on the Spur almost a quarter of a Mile, and then the Word being given to make a Stand, we did so; though the Body could never be rallied. Those that came back made a Charge, wherein some of them fell. By this time Prince Rupert was come with a good Body of Horse from the right Wing; but they having done their part, and not being in Order, could never be brought to charge again, nor to rally any of the broken Troops; and so after all the endeavours of the King and Prince Rupert, to the hazard of their Persons, they were fain to quit the Field, and to leave Fairfax Master of all our Foot, Cannon, Baggage and Plunder taken at Leicester. Our Foot had Quarter given them, but were all Prisoners, except some few Officers who escaped, and our Horse made haste, never staying until they came under the Works of Leicester...

It is generally accepted that the 'rising Ground of very great Advantage about a Mile from Harborow' upon

which the Royalists were first marshalled is the ridge stretching between East Farndon and Great Oxenden. From here, according to Walker, Prince Rupert, dissatisfied with the scoutmaster's report and hearing that the enemy were retreating, went forward on a personal reconnaissance to discover the whereabouts of his opponents. When he had done so, Rupert ordered the rest of the army to hurry after him: Walker supposed that the Prince, witnessing fresh signs of withdrawal (probably the New Model Army's one hundred pace retreat, commented on by Sprigge), was of the belief he could catch the Parliamentarians at a disadvantage. As it was, Walker felt that the Royalists' hasty approach merely gave their opponents the opportunity to choose their ground.

Nevertheless, despite the inauspicious circumstances, the battle which followed appeared at first to go the Royalists' way. On the right wing Rupert's cavalry broke through. In the centre, after a minimal exchange of fire, Lord Astley's Foot forced back their opponents. Only on the left wing did matters go awry. Sir Marmaduke Langdale's overmatched horsemen were scattered, freeing those of their opponents who did not take off in pursuit to turn against the Royalist infantry. The King was about to lead his mounted reserve in a charge against the Parliamentarian Horse harrying Langdale's men but a courtier turned King Charles aside and the retrograde movement spread confusion in the ranks. They could not be brought to attack in a body thereafter and although Prince Rupert's men had by now returned to their original position they too were unwilling to renew the struggle. The field was therefore left to the New Model Army, which captured all the Royalist Foot, artillery and baggage.

The Royalist officer, Sir Henry Slingsby, was also present at Naseby and his account of proceedings complements that written by Walker. The Royalist army had left Market Harborough:

...we had not march'd a Mile out of Town, having taken a Hill whereupon a Chappell stood, but we could diserne ye enemy's horse upon another Hill about a Mile or two before us, wch was ye same on wch Naseby stood: here we made a Hault, but after prayers being said, Prince Ruport draws forth a good body of horse, & advanceth towards ye enemy, where he sees their horse marching up on ye side of ye Hill to yt place where after they imbattl'd their whole army: but being hindred of any nearer approach, by reason ye place between us & ym, was full of burts & Water, we wheel'd about, & by our guides were brought upon a fair peice of ground, partly corn & partly heath, under Nasby, about Half a mile distant from ye place.

The prince having taken his ground began to put in order [his] horse in sight of ye enemy, who were now come to ye top of ye Hill, & begin to draw down their Regiments upon ye side of ye hill: where they took their ground to imbattle their forces: immediately he sends to ye King, to hasten away ye foot, & Cannon, wch were not yet come off ye Hill where they first made ye randevous; & he perceiv'd yt General Fairfax intend'd not to quitt ye advantage of ye Hill, where he had drawn up his men: so advantageous was it, yt they could easily observe in wt body we drew up our men, & ye utmost yt we were, wn as they lay without our sight, having ye Hill to cover ym, & appear'd no more to us yn wt they had drawn out in Battalio upon ye side of Nasby Hill; besides, they had possess'd an Hedge upon our right wing wch they had lin'd with Musqueteers to Gall our horse, (as indeed they did) before we could come up to charge theirs. It fell upon Prince Ruport to charge at yt disadvantage, & many of ye Regiment [were] wound'd by shot from ye hedge before we could joyne wth theirs on yt wing: but [he] so behav'd himself in ye charge, yt he beat ym upm upon yt wing beyond ye Hills, & had our success ben ye like upon our left wing, in probability we might have had ye day.

But our Northern horse who stood upon yt wing, & ye Newark horse who was appoint'd their receive [relief] being out front'd & overpour'd by their assailants, after they were close joyn'd, they stood a pritty while, & neither seem'd to yeild, till more came up to their flanks & put ym to rout, & wheeling to our right took ym in disorder, & so presently made our whole horse run: & our foot thus left nak'd were fourc'd to lay down their arms. Ye enemy did not pursue, wch



gave time to us to stop, & ready our men, & ye prince on one hand, & Sr. Marmaduke Langdale on ye other, (ye King yet being upon ye place) having got together as many as they could, made an offer of a 2nd charge, but could not abide it; they being horse & foot in good order, & we but a few horse only, & those mightily discourag'd; yt so we were immediately made to run...<sup>5</sup>

From the East Farndon - Great Oxenden ridge the horizon of one's view to the south-west is bounded by the ridge just outside Naseby, as Slingsby observes. The distance between the two ridges, however, is nearer four miles than the 'mile or two' he cites. Slingsby confirms that Prince Rupert undertook a personal reconnaissance and that in doing so he witnessed 'ye [enemy] horse marching up on ye side of ye Hill to yt place where after they imbattl'd their whole army'. The nature of the intervening ground - 'full of burts & Water' - prevented a direct approach by the Royalist army so it 'wheel'd about' and was led to 'a fair peice of ground, partly corn & partly heath, under Nasby'.

Before continuing with an analysis of Slingsby's evidence it seems appropriate to touch upon a longstanding debate. Much ink has been expended by historians in an attempt to reconcile the statements made by various contemporary authorities on the movements of the two armies on the morning before the battle. Sprigge, it will be recalled, suggested that Sir Thomas Fairfax, in taking up a position in Turnmoore Field, was reacting to the enemy's westwards advance. Walker, however, believed that Prince Rupert was spurred to attack because he saw existing movement which suggested to him that the New Model Army was retreating; Slingsby too reports that the Parliamentarians were on the move before the Royalists began their westwards march. The apparent contradiction in these views was first addressed by the eminent historian Samuel Gardiner<sup>6</sup> and over the years his explanation of the sequence of events has come to be fairly widely accepted (see, for instance, the Northamptonshire Archaeology Unit panel alongside the Naseby Obelisk). Gardiner believed that at about eight in the morning the New Model Army was near the eastern end of the Naseby ridge (near the obelisk), facing in the direction of the village of Clipston and Market Harborough. Cromwell, realising the strength of the position (because of both the slope and the difficult ground - the burts and water) was uneasy. A certain W.G., who related the story in the pamphlet *A just apology for an abused army* (1647), heard him speak:

'Let us I beseech you draw back to yonder hill, which will encourage the enemy to charge us, which they cannot doe in that place, without absolute ruine'. This he spake with so much cheerfull resolution and confidence, as though he had foreseen the victory, and was therefore condescended unto...<sup>7</sup>.

Thus, Gardiner surmised, the New Model Army moved a mile westwards to take up a new position above Broad Moor, doing so almost simultaneously with the Royalist advance guard led by Prince Rupert (the Prince having come to a similar conclusion about the inadvisability of approaching the Parliamentarians from the direction of Clipston). The fact that elements of the two armies were marching westwards to their flank at pretty much the same time led memorialists on both sides to believe that they were conforming to the movements of the other.

Returning to Slingsby's narrative, his comment that the enemy had an uninterrupted view of the Royalist army's deployment whilst remaining hidden themselves bears out what Sprigge wrote, that the New Model Army withdrew 100 paces to a reverse slope 'so the Enemy might not perceive in what form our battell was drawn'. Slingsby alludes also to the presence of Parliamentarian troops stationed behind the hedges on the Royalist right, although their fire was unable to stop Prince Rupert's charge on that flank from being successful. The problem instead was on the other wing, where the Northern and Newark Horse 'out front'd & overpour'd' was eventually routed, allowing their opponents to turn against the Royalist Foot and force it to surrender. Prince Rupert and Sir Marmaduke Langdale managed to rally some of the cavalry but could not bring their men to renew the fight; when the victorious New Model Army presented a fresh front the last of the Royalists left the field.

There are many more documents associated with the Battle of Naseby but these are of varying degrees of value.

Some, such as the reports made to Parliament by Sir Thomas Fairfax and Oliver Cromwell, merely state that victory was achieved, without going into detail. Others, such as the best of the plethora of pamphlet and newsletter reports of the battle, provide more information but tend ultimately to become repetitive. What follows, therefore, has been chosen selectively, the better to illustrate different aspects of the battle.

In the pamphlet *A More Particular and Exact Relation* two impressions of the battle were provided, the first written by George Bishop, the second by Colonel John Okey<sup>8</sup>. Bishop's account is worth quoting briefly for his description of the landscape and his explanation of why the fighting began on the Parliamentary left flank.

About 11 of the clock wee were drawn both Armies into Battalia in Nasby fields, a place of little hills and vales, in a direct line equall to both parts, the ground some ploughed, some Champion ...  
The wind was Northwest, and before we joyned battail, blew stiffe, equall on both parts; onely the Enemy had it somewhat more advantagious for them: in regard the wind was that way; both Parties fought to get the winde, which occasioned our left wing of Horse, and of Foot, and their right, first to engage...

Colonel Okey is worth quoting at greater length for his view of events from a well defined sector of the battlefield. He commanded the dragoons posted by Cromwell behind the Lantford (or Sulby) hedges.

I was half a mile behinde in a Medow giving my men Ammunition, and had not the Lieutenant Gen. [*Cromwell*] come presently, & caused me with all speed to mount my men, & flank our left Wing, which was the King's right Wing of horse; where was Prince Maurice, who charged at the head of his Regiment, and the King himself in the next reserve charged at the head of his men; but by that time I could get my men to light, and deliver up their Horses, in a little close, the Enemy drew towards us: which my men perceiving, they with shooting and rejoycing received them, although they were incompassed on the one side with the King's Horse, and on the other side with Foot and Horse to get the Close; but it pleased God that wee beat off both the Horse and the Foot on the left, and the right Wing, and cleared the Field, and kept our ground: When as the King's Horse had driven our men a mile before them on the left Wing at their first comming on; then wee discovered many of the King's Regiment, by reason that they came somewhat neare unto us; before ever they discharged a Pistoll at any Horse; and had not wee by God's providence been there, there had been but few of Colonell Butler's Regiment left. After this wee gave up our selves for lost men, but wee resolved every man to stand to the last, and presently upon it, God of his providence ordered it so, that our right Wing, which was Colonell Cromwell his Regiment drave the Enemy before them; which I perceiving (after one houre's battail) caused all my men to mount and to charge into their Foot, which accordingly they did; and took all their Colours, and 500 Prisoners, besides what wee killed, and all their Armes. After this the King his Horse drew up into a body againe: and then I drew up my Dragoons, and charged the King's Regiment of Horse, and they faced about and run away and never made any stay till they came to Leicester, which was about 15 miles from the place where we fought: Wee took, as neare as we can guesse, between 4 and 5000 men...

Okey confirms that he was ordered into position on the extreme left wing by Cromwell himself. His men had little time to prepare themselves before the enemy attacked. While Okey's claim that the King himself took part in the charge can be dismissed, what he writes about his command being 'incompassed' by Royalist Horse and Foot is of some interest. Rupert, it seems likely, had stationed commanded musketeers amongst the cavalry on the Royalist right flank (as was his wont), and these (and even some horsemen) had attempted to dislodge Okey's dragoons from their position by advancing to the left of the Sulby hedges. Okey's men, however, repulsed them and subsequently helped prevent Colonel Butler's Horse from being completely destroyed when part of the Royalist cavalry reserve swept down to reinforce Prince Rupert's success on the western side of the Battlefield.

When, after an hour's fighting, Cromwell had begun to dominate the Battlefield, Okey bade his men remount and joined in the attack on the Royalist Foot. Once it had surrendered Okey's dragoons took their place in the fresh line of battle established by Fairfax and helped persuade the last of the Royalist cavalry to leave the field.

According to the annotation of the contemporary bookseller George Thomason, who compiled the great collection of Civil War pamphlets and newsletters known as the Thomason Tracts, the account of Naseby contained in *An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons* was written by Sir Thomas Fairfax's secretary, John Rushworth<sup>9</sup>. This narrative stresses how quickly the two armies came to handstrokes, with few preliminaries: ...each wing of both sides charged [the] other, with that eagerness, that they had not patience to shoot of one peece of Ordnance, our Dragoones begun the Battaile Flanking the right wing of the Enemies Horse as they charged our left wing of Horse, the Foot charged [i.e. fired at] not each other till they were within twelve paces one of another and could not charge above twice, but were at push of Pike...

The author then describes the Parliamentary victory, providing at the same time an interesting explanation for the success of their cavalry: '...that which made our Horse so terrible to them, was the thicknes of our reserves and their orderly and timely comming on, not one failing to come on in turne'. This describes well the combat between Cromwell's and Langdale's wings; his superiority in numbers and the narrowness of the ground meant that Cromwell had to deploy his men in three lines, and there is no question but that Cromwell handled his command expertly. However, on the far wing the Parliamentary cavalry did badly, a fact which this particular writer declined to acknowledge. It was left to a more candid scribe in *The Weekly Account* (11 to 18 August 1645) to supply reasons for their failure:

One of the Dutch Princes (which we all supposed to be Rupert) led up their right Wing, and put our left to a shamefull retreat; though I confesse two things may somewhat excuse them. First, the Kings men had some markes to know each other by in the fight, and so they knew them not til they were upon them. 2. In that they were new raised men out of the Associated Counties, better armed than hearted<sup>10</sup>.

Nevertheless, victory overall was Parliament's, rather to the surprise of some, as the writer in *An Ordinance* acknowledged: '..thus hath the Lord gone along with this new moulded Army, so much contemned by many & left as sheepe to the slaughter by others'. It was a significant moment: the New Model Army's triumph signalled the beginning of the end for the Royalist cause.

In as far as the Battle of Naseby has provoked debate in recent years this has not been to do with the course of the fighting - which is clear enough - but the extent of the battlefield. At one time historians were agreed: the battle was fought in a field a mile broad to the north-west of Naseby, as Sprigge suggested. Austin Woolrych might disagree with Colonel A H Burne over the outer limits of the battlefield on its eastern side but the difference between them was only 500 yards<sup>11</sup>.

Then in 1968 Colonel H C B Rogers published his *Battles and Generals of the Civil Wars*, arguing that many previous Civil War historians had made the frontages of the armies involved much too short. Citing as his authority Richard Elton's *Compleat Body of the Art Military* (1650) he contended that when the Foot fought in 'Order', the normal fighting distance, there was a gap of three feet between each man. Add to that the one and a half feet for the man himself and each soldier occupied four and a half feet. Rogers continues: 'A unit of 100 men in six ranks would have a frontage of 17 men, or about 25 yards. Therefore, dividing the strength of an infantry unit by 4 should give its approximate fighting frontage in yards'. Applying this ruling to Naseby, Rogers calculated that the near 8,000 Parliamentary Foot at Naseby had a frontage of 2,000 yards, with the Horse occupying another 1,500 yards of ground - a line of battle stretching two miles<sup>12</sup>. Since no one disagrees that the Sulby hedges provide the western limit of the battlefield the additional space had to be found to the east. This means that Rogers must position Cromwell's wing of cavalry on the ridge top near New House Farm.

During the 1970s Colonel Rogers' revisionist views did not make themselves felt to any great extent. True, Brigadier Peter Young, in his 1974 book co-written with Richard Holmes *The English Civil War*, pushed Cromwell's wing a little further east than he had previously done when writing in collaboration with Colonel Burne in 1959<sup>13</sup>. John Kinross too, in *The Battlefields of Britain* (London 1979), represented the Parliamentary army at Naseby extending further east than had often been the case before. But the spotlight was cast firmly on Rogers' opinion when, in the 1980s, the long threatened plans to construct an A1-M1 link road which would pass through the vicinity of Naseby became reality. While there could be no doubt that if the intended road was to pass north of Naseby it would interfere with the battlefield in some way (it would, of necessity, cut across the path of Prince Rupert's descent on the Parliamentary baggage train, drawn up west of Naseby village), it was possible to argue that the main area of fighting on Broad Moor would remain unaffected if the line of the road remained south of Mill Hill. But if Cromwell's cavalry wing was held to extend as far east as the high ground at New House Farm (as Rogers believed) a road which passed south of Mill Hill would still affect an important part of the battlefield, since before dropping down behind Mill Hill the road crosses the ridge near New House Farm. Accordingly, amongst objectors to the proposed road Rogers' views achieved much currency and the essence of his argument was elaborated upon in publications such as Sir Charles Rowley's pamphlet *The Battle of Naseby 1645: The Starting Point of Modern Democracy*, and Barry Denton's *Naseby Fight*<sup>14</sup>. Denton, in particular, endorsed Rogers' belief that each infantryman in the New Model Army, deployed in 'Order', would require a ground space of four and a half feet - three feet between each man and a foot and a half for the man himself - by quoting from William Barriffe's influential drill book of the time *Military Discipline: Or the Young Artillery-Man*. 'Order', Barriffe is held to lay down, is three foot "being the space of ground between man and man"<sup>15</sup>. On this calculation Denton concludes, the Foot of the New Model Army by itself would have had a frontage of a mile.

Extrapolating frontages from military drill books, however, is fraught with dangers and consultation of Barriffe's work makes it apparent that Denton has misinterpreted the evidence. In chapter six of the book, entitled *Of the severall distances*, Barriffe states explicitly that 'order in file was three foot' and alongside, in the margin, 'The exact place from whence to measure your distance is from the Center of your men, whether it be Rank or File'<sup>16</sup>. Thus anyone who allows an additional one and a half feet for the width of a man in their calculations is in error and the frontage of the Parliamentary Foot at Naseby, as a consequence, has to be reduced by a third, which in itself entails that the battlefield does not extend as far east as has been imagined.

The map which accompanies Sir Charles Rowley's pamphlet on the Battle, showing Cromwell's cavalry wing drawn up beyond New House Farm, makes it clear that he too considers the battlefield to be over two miles in width. Rowley, however, bases his reconstruction not so much on a calculation of frontages but by superimposing Sir Bernard de Gomme's plan of the Battle in the British Library on a modern map of the Naseby area. This is a risky method of proceeding. As Brigadier Peter Young pointed out, the Royalist order of battle shown in de Gomme's plan dates from at least ten days before Naseby, since Sir Richard Willys' contingent is included and it had returned to Newark after the storming of Leicester<sup>17</sup>. What this suggests is that Prince Rupert had given de Gomme an order of battle to note down at Leicester for use during the campaign and that much later this information was incorporated by de Gomme in his highly-stylized, fair copy plan of the Battle of Naseby now held in the British Library. If the assumption that the fair copy was drawn some time afterwards is correct this would account not only for its stylized nature but also explain why de Gomme is able to identify all the units of the Parliamentary Army so exactly (which he could not do, for instance, in his companion plan of the Battle of Marston Moor): he had, in the interim, seen Robert Streeter's 1647 plan of Naseby in *Anglia Rediviva*. This fact, if true, casts de Gomme's plan in a different light. Its value becomes largely dependent on the accuracy of Streeter's picture map, not only for the New Model Army's order of battle but also the topographical detail shown behind the Parliamentary lines, which de Gomme would have been unable to discover otherwise. Most particularly, de Gomme reproduces exactly the line which Streeter gives to the Clipston road as it heads north-eastwards out of Naseby past the windmill. This has important implications for Rowley's contention that the Parliamentary battleline extended two miles to the east. Rowley argues that the continuation of the line of the Clipston road on the de Gomme plan, if overlaid on a modern map of the Naseby area, shows it passing through Cromwell's cavalry on the Parliamentary right flank: *ergo*, Cromwell's cavalry

must have stretched at least as far as the Clipston road and New House Farm. This, Rowley considers, is confirmed by Streeter's map, which shows the Clipston road heading out from Naseby in the direction of Cromwell's cavalry and re-emerging on the horizon as it passes between the Royalist infantry and Langdale's cavalry.

What is clear, however, is that Streeter's picture map is drastically foreshortened and that the ridge on which Naseby stands in the foreground does not bulk nearly large enough. If the foreshortening is partially removed, as it can be if the Naseby ridge section of the map is enlarged and the backdrop reduced (see appendix 3), a different picture emerges: the Clipston road, as it leaves Naseby, is now shown passing to the right of Cromwell's cavalry, not through them. The Clipston road, moreover, bears even less relation to the road near the horizon of Streeter's picture than it did before: this second road, it seems apparent, must be the road from Naseby to Sibbertoft. What all this means for de Gomme's plan of the Battle, meanwhile, is that in copying Streeter (as seems probable), he failed to allow for the foreshortening in the picture and reproduced Streeter's detail of roads, buildings and windmill on the Naseby ridge as it stood. In that case, the conclusion has to be that no reliance can be placed on de Gomme's representation of distances behind the Parliamentary lines to provide a scale to be set alongside a modern map, as Rowley has attempted to do.

If the doubts expressed about the way frontages and maps have been employed undermines the revisionist argument for a battlefield two miles wide, it remains to affirm why the case for the traditional, more confined Naseby battlefield continues to be valid. The first thing to recall is the explicitness of Sprigge's statement that the Parliamentarians drew into 'a large, fallow field on the Northwest side of Naseby ... which was a convenient place for us to fight the Enemy in'. Thanks to the Naseby parish map of 1630 this field can be identified without hesitation as Turnmoore Field. Sprigge also quotes a contemporary pamphlet to the effect that 'The Field was about a mile broad where the battail was fought, and from the outmost Flank of the right, to the left Wing, took up the whole ground'. This is far from endorsing the notion that the battlefield was two miles wide and is a much better description of Turnmoore Field.

The fact that the rabbit warren can be identified which, as Sprigge wrote, in company with the unevenness of the ground, caused difficulties for much of Cromwell's right wing cavalry, is another means of fixing the battlefield's extent to the east. The warren is marked on the 1630 Naseby parish map and was identified as Lodge Hill by the antiquarian J Mastin in *The History and Antiquities of Naseby* (written 1792, published 1818)<sup>18</sup>. The warren hill today lies a little east of the Naseby to Sibbertoft road: the outermost squadrons of Cromwell's cavalry were most incommoded by it; Whalley's two divisions, inside them to the left, had better going.

Next there is the question of the existence, or otherwise, of the Naseby to Sibbertoft road in 1645. Proponents of the view that the eastern edge of the Battlefield extended beyond the Clipston road have argued that the Sibbertoft road was only laid out later with enclosure in 1828 and that accordingly the road shown by Streeter passing between the Royalist Foot and Langdale's cavalry must be the road to Clipston<sup>19</sup>. In fact, the Naseby to Sibbertoft road is shown on Thomas Eyre's 1775 map of Northamptonshire (for which the surveying was done during the 1720s and 1730s). As for the evidence of the 1630 Naseby parish map, this is more problematic. Parts of the original have apparently faded so that, depending on one's point of view, one can either see at least the southern half of the road to Sibbertoft quite clearly, discern only the most vestigial of tracks, or feel entitled to leave it off a transcription altogether<sup>20</sup>. This might be considered sufficient to call the existence of the Sibbertoft road in 1645 into question except that it soon becomes evident how selective is the information presented by the map of 1630: it does not show a road continuing towards Clipston beyond its fork with the Kelmarsh road either, which undermines to the same degree the argument that the road shown on the Royalist side of the hill by Streeter is the route to Clipston. On balance therefore it seems likely that there was a road from Naseby to Sibbertoft in 1645 and that this is what Streeter depicts. It would, after all, be rather strange if there had not been a means of direct communication between the two villages.

To conclude this discussion a reassessment of the frontages question, in the light of what has been written

already, must be made. The New Model Army at Naseby totalled approximately 14,000 men, divided roughly equally between Foot on one hand and Horse and dragoons on the other. Of the 7,000 Foot, Streeter's drawing shows five regiments in the first line and three in the second. After deducting the 300 men of the forlorn hope we are left with 837 men per regiment: the first line would therefore have contained 4,185 troops. Drawn up six deep and allowing a yard per man at Order the first line frontage (including gaps between regiments) would be around 750 yards. The 6,000 men of the twelve regiments of Horse meanwhile (Okey's 1,000 dragoons, drawn up behind the Sulby hedges, are excluded from the calculation) are shown by Streeter deployed in 24 divisions, eleven on the left flank under Ireton, thirteen on the right under Cromwell. Ireton's command is drawn up in two lines, six divisions in the first and five in the second. Assuming each division was deployed three deep, as was standard practice by this stage of the war, and allowing five foot of space for each horse (as a contemporary military manual like John Vernon's *The Young Horseman* recommended<sup>21</sup>) Ireton's front would total - with intervals - about 850 yards. Cromwell's wing, although stronger, was cramped for space and, forced to draw up in three lines, could only manage a first line of five divisions of Horse. On the same calculation its frontage would have extended a little over 700 yards.

Added together, these figures give the New Model Army a total frontage of 2,330 yards - just over a mile and a quarter. With its left flank firmly anchored on the Sulby hedges the Parliamentarian line would have extended across the Sibbertoft road from Turnmoore Field into Shepshoks Field, over Sheddon Hill as far as the present-day Naseby Covert and come to an end hard against the hedges which separated the fields belonging to Naseby parish from those of Clipston beyond. This sounds right: a field a mile (or so) broad, with all the ground taken up. It also *looks* right, if one compares the findings with Streeter's map.

Confirmation that the numerically superior New Model Army could fit into the ground available makes a precise calculation of the Royalist army's frontage less crucial. Most historians, following the figures on de Gomme's map, put the Royalists at between 7,500 and 9,000 men; but even if the strength of 12,000 men suggested by Lord Belasyse<sup>22</sup> in his account of the Battle of Naseby were to be accepted there would be no great difficulty in fitting them into the ground between the Sulby hedges and the present-day Long Hold Spinney.

### **Indication of Importance**

The importance of the Battle of Naseby does not need to be laboured. It was *the* decisive battle of the English Civil War. King Charles lost all the infantry belonging to his main field army, an experienced force which he could never replace. Although the First Civil War dragged on for another year it was clear almost immediately after the Battle of Naseby was fought that the critical moment had passed.

In as far as Naseby settled the outcome of the Civil War it is of crucial significance to the constitutional history of the country. The victory of the New Model Army assured the supremacy of Parliament. The monarchy in Britain failed to develop in the absolutist fashion seen on the Continent of Europe.

The Battle of Naseby is also important in terms of the country's military development. Victory was achieved by a national army which transcended regional particularism. In that respect the New Model Army's success hastened the establishment in 1660 of a standing army, from which the modern British Army claims direct descent.

The most thorough archaeological study of the battlefield was undertaken in the 1840s by the then landowner, Edward Fitzgerald, who made his findings available to Thomas Carlyle, who at the time was working on his edition of Oliver Cromwell's writings and speeches. Fitzgerald discovered that many of what were thought to be grave pits were in fact marl pits but he did uncover a mass grave, which he estimated probably contained a hundred skeletons, in the Closterwell field at the foot of Dust Hill. The collection of artefacts from the battlefield however has never been systematically recorded, except in 1991, in advance of the construction of the A1-M1 link road. The ground between the Clipston and Welford roads was swept using metal detectors but

the search uncovered only two musket balls. Nor did a watching brief undertaken when the topsoil was removed before the building of the new road observe the uncovering of any other finds. This at least suggests that the new road does not impinge on areas of significant fighting<sup>23</sup>.

Naseby remains one of the best preserved of all England's battlefields. The building of the new A1-M1 link road, although it separates the site of the Parliamentary baggage train west of Naseby on Carvells Lane from the rest of the Battlefield, is screened from the main area of fighting on Broad Moor by two ridgetops.

### **Battlefield Area**

The battlefield area boundary defines the outer reasonable limit of the battle, taking into account the positions of the combatants at the outset of fighting and the focal area of the battle itself. It does not include areas over which fighting took place subsequent to the main battle. Wherever possible, the boundary has been drawn so that it is easily appreciated on the ground.

To the north the boundary of the battlefield area has been drawn behind the crest and forward slope of Dust Hill: there would have been no purpose in the Royalists positioning troops out of sight of the enemy further back. To the east the battlefield line is drawn behind the slight but noticeable crest which sweeps south-eastwards from Long Hold Spinney: this provides a natural boundary to the battlefield. The line then takes in the eastern edge of Naseby Covert, which lies at the foot of the uneven ground with which Cromwell's cavalry wing had to contend.

The battlefield boundary to the south runs behind the Parliamentary position. In drawing this line the principle acted upon has been to include all the high ground north of Mill Hill, so as to provide sufficient space for the deployment of the Parliamentary second and third lines, both Horse and Foot, including the area over which they were initially pushed back by the Royalists. The line itself dog-legs south-westwards to the Sibbertoft Road near Mill Hill Farm.

To the west the battlefield boundary is drawn to include the Sulby hedges, dividing the parishes of Naseby and Sulby, behind which Okey's dragoons took post. Some additional space is included beyond the hedges to allow for the possibility that the Royalists attacked down both sides of them at once, as Okey appears to imply.

The Royalist and Parliamentary baggage trains present different problems for the battlefield area. Both were attacked - some camp followers with the Royalist baggage train were killed after the battle and the Parliamentary baggage train was summoned to surrender by Prince Rupert earlier in the day. But whereas the Parliamentary baggage train was gathered together in a defended camp, the general whereabouts of which can be gauged from Streeter's map, the Royalist baggage train was very probably still strung out on the line of march until late in the day, having been left behind (with much of the Royalist artillery) when Prince Rupert hurried the King's army into action. Since it played no integral part in the main fighting, it would be inconsistent with the principles applied in defining battlefields to attempt to include the Royalist baggage train in the battlefield area even if its eventual location could be identified.

With the Parliamentary baggage train, however, inclusion in the battlefield area is more feasible. Basing his argument on the testimony of the two Parliamentary commissioners who accompanied the New Model Army, Harcourt Leighton and Thomas Herbert, Sir Charles Rowley has maintained that the Royalist Foot were so successful in their initial assault that they managed to push back the Parliamentarian Foot as far as the baggage train. Although Leighton and Herbert do indeed write that the enemy were 'beat back ... from the traine' their meaning is far from clear and the interpretation placed on the phrase by Sir Charles Rowley is contrary to everything written by anyone else who witnessed the Battle<sup>24</sup>. Nevertheless, the Parliamentary baggage train clearly played a significant part in the battle by tying up Rupert's cavalymen at the end of their headlong charge

on the western side.

From Streeter's map the train appears to be situated to the west of Naseby in the vicinity of Carvells Lane (the road to Welford would seem to pass north of the camp). Yet it is nonetheless possible that Streeter's foreshortening has once again distorted the picture so that the camp is actually further to the north (as de Gomme's map suggests, although his representation of this part of the battlefield is suspect). To accommodate the train, therefore, the battlefield boundary extends southwards, across the new road and Carvells Lane, using field boundaries for convenience.



## Notes

1. Symonds, Richard *Diary of the Marches of the Royal Army during the Great Civil War* ed. C F Long (Camden Society 74 1859) p193.
2. Printed in Peter Young's *Naseby 1645 The Campaign and the Battle* (London 1985) pp347-354.
3. Thomason Tract E.288.28 in the British Library.
4. Printed in Young *op. cit.* pp317-319.
5. Printed in *ibid.* pp311-312.
6. Gardiner S R *History of the Great Civil War 1642-1649* vol. II 380-385.
7. Thomason Tract E.372.22 in the British Library.
8. Thomason Tract E.288.38 in the British Library.
9. Thomason Tract E.288.26 in the British Library.
10. Thomason Tract E.288.33 in the British Library.
11. See Austin Woolrych *Battles of the English Civil War* (London 1961) p123.
12. Rogers, H C B *Battles and Generals of the Civil Wars 1642-1651* (London 1968) p46, 232-3.
13. See Brigadier Peter Young and Richard Holmes *The English Civil War. A Military History of the Three Civil Wars 1642-1651* (London 1974) and Lt-Col. Alfred H Burne and Lt-Col. Peter Young *The Great Civil War. A Military History of the First Civil War 1642-1646* (London 1959).
14. Rowley, Sir Charles *The Battle of Naseby 1645: The Starting Point of Modern Democracy* (privately published, 1989); Barry Denton *Naseby Fight* (Partizan Press, 2nd ed. 1991).
15. Denton *op. cit.* p29.
16. The text is the same whether one consults the 1639, 1643 or 1660 editions of Barriffe's work.
17. Young *Naseby 1645*. p235.
18. See Glenn Foard (forthcoming 1995) *An Analysis of the Civil War Battlefield at Naseby* (Post-Medieval Archaeology).
19. See Rowley *op. cit.* p11.
20. See respectively Foard *op. cit.*, Woolrych *op. cit.* p122 and R Greenhall *Naseby: A Parish History* (Leicester 1974) p23.
21. Vernon, John *The Young Horseman or The Honest Plain Dealing Cavalier* (Partizan Press reprint, ed. John Tincey 1993).
22. Lord John Belasyse's short account of the Battle of Naseby (at which he was present) printed in Young

*Naseby 1645* pp320-22.

23. This archaeological information is taken from Foard *op. cit.*
24. Leighton and Herbert's report is printed in Young *Naseby 1645* p337. Sir Charles Rowley's interpretation of the report is severely criticised by Nigel Jackson in an article 'Naseby: an Update and Reviews' in *English Civil War Notes and Queries* 39, published by the Partizan Press.

## **APPENDICES**

- 1 Streater's pictorial plan of the Battle of Naseby
2. Sir Bernard de Gomme's plan of the Battle of Naseby
3. Streater's plan with altered perspective